

2011 Canada-Barbados Environmental Essay Contest Winning Essays

On February 19, 2011 nearly 60 students in Barbados submitted their essays to compete in the Canada-Barbados Environmental Essay Contest.

Six winners were announced on March 19, 2011, and they shared \$4,000 in cash prizes.

The winning essays including Honourable Mentions are below. These are accurate transcriptions of the original submissions - there are no corrections for spelling or grammar.

Age 9-13 Category

1st Prize

Kiara Smith

Why is the environment important to Barbados?

Environment; what is the environment? Is it the trees, is it the sea, is it nature or is it our surroundings? Well, what can it be? For me, the environment is our surroundings, our nature, and our home. Now don't we need to take care of our surroundings? Don't we need to take care of our home? Yes we do. Why?

Barbados is our home, our beautiful home. So if you are driving along and decide to throw your used food and drink out of the window, what do you think will happen? Do you think nothing will happen? Then you're extremely wrong! Barbados would start to look like a dump if everyone did that. Sooner or later, no one would want to visit us from overseas. The tourists would say "No way to Barbados!" they would want to go somewhere beautiful with places they can observe, not to a place to see garbage and pollution. If we destroy the beauty of

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our environment, no more tourists would come. No more tourists means no more foreign exchange for our country.

Now think about our plants, trees and animals. We can't just think about ourselves and our homes and burn or destroy the plants and trees. These are some of our animals' homes like the Bajan green monkey. Trees are also used by us for materials such as making furniture from the mahogany tree and plants help us with oxygen, the air we breathe. So we can't pollute our environment, because we ourselves need it in Barbados, a clean healthy place to live. Not just for us, but the animals and plants and the fish.

The sea is absolutely special. You want to know why? Sometimes the sea is used to bring tourists to our beautiful island Barbados in those massive cruise ships. If we dare litter in the sea or in the water, our fish could die, like our lovely flying fish. Also turtles and fish would see our garbage and think that it's food and may choke on it. The coral reef is also very beautiful. If you travel on a boat, or go diving, you shouldn't take any coral. As a matter of fact, it is against the law in Barbados to do that, because it would be seen as stealing a part of the fish's home.

So if it were you, I would get some facts and listen to what is important about the environment. Remember that is not all about you, it is about all our surroundings including the animals, plants, trees and gullies. The environment provides a home for the animals and we shouldn't litter or treat Barbados like a dump. It is our home, it is a tourist attraction and we need to protect it now and always for future generations.

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2nd Prize

Jade Griffith

WHY THE ENVIRONMENT IS IMPORTANT TO BARBADOS

There are many reasons why the environment is important to Barbados. The first one I will explain is the beaches and coral reefs. Reefs act as a guard or buffer to protect beaches from ocean waves. Barbados' coral reefs protect its beaches from storms and wave action. Beaches are an important part of the tourist industry so the reefs must be protected.

Barbados' economy and people depend on coral reefs for fish and marine wildlife. Fishermen need the coral reefs for their livelihood. Coral reefs have more varieties of fish than anywhere else in the world. Reefs create homes for more than 700 species of coral, 4,000 species of fish and thousands of other types of animals and plants. Overall, scientists believe that an estimated one million species of animals and plants depend on the coral reefs.

Limestone is another important part of the Barbados environment. Water in Barbados was provided from caves under the island. Barbados is made of limestone which was pushed up from the Ocean floor. We get most of our drinking water from rain. As the water goes into the earth, it is filtered by the limestone before it does into the reservoirs. Therefore, we must protect the limestone that filters the water by not allowing illegal dumping of garbage and

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illegal building of homes. Too much illegal building or dumping will pollute our drinking water.

Birds are also important, since they are very good at helping people to know if their ecosystem is healthy. This is because when birds disappear from an area, it normally means that something is wrong. Birds also eat insects, so they are a natural way to control pests in gardens, on farms, and other places.

They also help with pollination of plants. By landing on a plant or sucking from the nectar from a flower, and then moving on to the next, a bird does the same job as bees. Birds can also spread seeds. They eat fruit and then when they stool the berry seeds are in the stool and can grow in a different place, maybe even a different parish. Bird stool is good fertilization for the seeds.

Therefore, protecting our beaches and coral reefs help with our tourism industry, not dumping garbage protects our drinking water and protecting our birds help our trees and plants to grow. Doing all of these things protect our environment and make our island a safe and a beautiful place to live.

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3rd Prize

Phoebe Vieira

Why the environment is important to Barbados

The most basic explanation of why the environment is important to Barbados, is because without it we cannot survive. It is where we eat, live, and reproduce. Our lives are dependent on the biosphere.

The biosphere is simply the way in which all natural things depend on each other. A good example of this is the food chain. The sun provides light and heat for plants. The plants are consumed by animals, which are then eaten by humans, or used to make materials for clothing. Even tiny insects like mosquitoes play a part in the food chain and the environment and, as we all know, those tiny buzzy bees spread pollen for new plants. Plants are essential to humans, not only for food, but without them there would be no oxygen and we would not be able to breathe.

One of the biggest threats to our environment is global warming, this causes a rise in sea levels, which affects the marine life. This rise causes land to break down, affecting animals living along the coastal areas. Our coral reefs are home to many species that we use for food. They are also beautiful, which attracts tourists and their money. The reefs form a protective barrier around the islands and without them the coastline would break down and wash away into the sea. We must protect our reefs, because once they are gone, they won't return. They

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are made by coral, which grow only a centimetre each year. The reefs we have today took thousands of years to develop. The reefs are a perfect example of our environment protecting us.

Events in different parts of the world, can also affect the environment in Barbados. For example, the melting icecaps. The icecaps are made of water, the sun heats them, which causes the ice to melt, altering the sea levels. As we all know, the beaches are one of the main tourist attractions in Barbados and with the increasing sea levels, beach erosion is a serious worry. The icecaps also reflect light, as they melt the earth gets darker and absorbs more heat, which is why the temperatures in Barbados have increased. Scientists believe that this rise in temperature, increases both the frequency and intensity of hurricanes and the possibility of tsunamis and earthquakes threatening our islands' safety.

The environment is also important to Barbados as besides providing us with our home, our income and growth as a country depends on industry and our main industries are dependent on the environment. If the reefs die and we lose our beaches and our weather becomes unstable, it will affect tourism and the international business community which bring money to the island. If the soil is polluted, it will threaten one of our main exports, sugar cane and our ability to produce food. The environment is important to Barbados, because without a stable, sustainable environment, we will ultimately cease to exist.

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HONOURABLE MENTION - Ages 9-13

Mohammed Nana

Why Is The Environment Important To Barbados?

As I sit on the sand, I notice lush green trees contrasting with the turquoise waters of my island Barbados. I think to myself what a beautiful environment that surrounds me.

I also notice trees being cut down to make buildings, lots of vehicles and factories releasing fumes into the air which pollutes our environment. I ponder over the importance of the environment to my lovely Barbados.

The environment is our surroundings. This includes all living and non-living organisms around us. The non-living components of our environment include land, water and air; and the living components of our environment are germs, plants, animals and people.

Without the environment, everyone and everything would die. It is essential to Barbados for many reasons. Firstly, the protection of land is very important to Barbados. Land is the upper layer of our planet earth. It is made up of rocks and soil. Soil is important because it contains nutrients that are needed for plants to grow. It also harbours worms, beetles, fungi and bacteria providing them with the nutrients they need to live.

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Trees are an essential part of our environment. Without trees, soil will be eroded. Trees also clean the air and keep the atmosphere cool. Trees provide oxygen, and human beings need oxygen to survive. Trees are also important in Barbados because they absorb sunlight and reduce heat.

Water is important to the environment of Barbados. With water, our plants grow well, our crops yield more and the atmosphere remains cool.

Air is an important element of our environment. We cannot live even a single minute without air. Fresh air is essential for our health.

People and animals around us are important to our environment, for this reason we must all respect and care for our environment.

Things which destroy the environment are coral bleaching, littering and polluting the land, air and sea. Coral bleaching is the whitening of corals, due to stress-induced loss of pigmentation within the protozoa. If there are no corals fish would not come so we would not have any more marine food. Littering is throwing away of plastic, aluminium tyres and in some places factory waste which would dirty our environment which would make diseases more often. This is why the environment is very important to our beautiful island Barbados.

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Rhea Campbell

Journey Of The Corn Curl Wrapper

The bell rang signalling the end of break. While Jenny and Kurt were walking back to class, she noticed that Kurt threw his corn curl wrapper on the ground without a second thought. Jenny scolded him about the harm the wrapper could cause; but Kurt just shrugged it off and continued walking to the classroom.

Now Kurt lived next door to his school. All that afternoon the wind was high: one gust blew the wrapper over the fence and into his mother's garden bed of exotic *Heliconia* seedlings. A few days later, while Kurt's mother was tending to her young plants, she noticed that a small bunch of seedling had withered. When she took a closer look, she saw the base of the stems smothered by a corn curl wrapper. On removing the wrapper, she realized the trapped heat had caused a scorching effect on the tiny stems. In her haste to save the little plants she forgot to discard the corn curl wrapper properly.

The next day there was a squall. The strong winds blew the wrapper into the garden bed beneath Kurt's bedroom window. Soon rainwater filled the wrapper and in time, the deadly dengue mosquito bred in the dirty water. Within a week Kurt became seriously ill with dengue fever.

Their gardener's blower blew the dried out wrapper into a gutter. Rainwater eventually washed the wrapper through the drains and out to sea. It floated for months among the seaweed, plankton and debris.

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During her summer vacation, Jenny often strolled along the beach. One morning, she spotted a young turtle struggling in a mass of fishing net. Its head was trapped inside an old corn curl wrapper. Immediately she called Turtle Hotline for help. The turtle rescue team freed the turtle and carefully discarded the corn curl wrapper.

Just as this single wrapper became a threat to many aspects of Barbados' environment because it was carelessly thrown away, pollution on a larger scale can cause major harm to our plant, animal and human life.

In order for our plants to flourish and photosynthesise effectively, generating oxygen for us to breathe, they need a non-toxic soil

Garbage, detergent and petroleum liquids washing into our ocean damage our sea life. Coral reefs die from algae formation and fish migrate leaving a shortage of food and underwater attractions.

If harmful refuse and sewage are not properly disposed of they can affect the population with serious illnesses and diseases like dengue fever, leptospirosis and cholera.

Litter takes away the natural beauty of Barbados, making the island less attractive and pleasant for us, who live here, and the visitors to our shores. If fewer tourists come to Barbados this would have a harmful affect on our economy.

That is why we should clean up our surroundings, protect our environment, help save lives and assist with the Barbados economy.

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Rebecca Clarke

Why is the Environment important to Barbados

Barbados: A peaceful place for all tourist to enjoy. The Environment: what is important to Barbados. If the Environment is not taken care of properly our crops won't grow. All the beautiful wild plants and trees won't grow. The wonderes animals will all die.

So let me tell you a little something me and every single one of my classmates did on Wednesday 2nd February 2011. We went on a trip to the national reserve of Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary Barbados. We got there by our Mum's and Dad's driving. The Mummy's and Daddy's came at eight forty AM sharp. We went to learn about nature and animals.

We chose a buddy system. My buddy was Katherine A. We went to feed some fish I thought they were small at first but then a crazy big fish jumped out of the water. I saw a yellow breast bird, a baby dark blue crab. I was really lucky to see a frigate bird. (They are the birds with big red thing under there necks).

There were some red macaws and we saw a parrot called bam bam. I saw a rich pink and black flamingo, a beautiful scarlet ibis as well. (My Mom found one of its feathers). Did you know that the lake there is the biggest lake in Barbados? The water is a mixture of fresh water and salt water. I saw a crazy bird called a spoonbill, it was light pink and had a black and white speckled bill. I saw a snowy white egret, I also saw a large egret. I saw a blue herron fly across the lake. I also saw a duck with a blue beak and legs. There was another duck that

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looked like it was doing “the worm”. I saw a handsome looking [bird] it was black and white. When it was time to go I saw a troop of monkeys. When we were turning into the school gate we were the first people there. Afterwards the bell rang it was like running with a speed of elephants! If we don't take care of our Environment Graeme Hall might have to sacrifice the animals, fish and birds. So right now, start right now, take care of your Environment. For example: pick up trash and recycle don't leave your trash on the ground that is no good. Recycle all your plastic bottle, all your glass bottles, even all your metal cans. Our school has started a can recycling program. Maybe we should start a plastic bottle program. Maybe a glass bottle one too. So who agrees with me now? We can plant more trees to help us breathe. Don't waste our paper that is made of trees too you know that right? We could even plant some flowers to make habitats a little better. Don't pick the leaves of the trees. That's no good either. Use rotten fruits and veggies and dead leaves for compost to make our Environment a little better. Do anything you can to help the Environment. To keep wild life alive not extinct. To keep giraffes, elephants, lions and zebras alive and running. Even some of your favourite animals have to sacrifice their lives even if they don't want to. For example monkeys, hyenas, cheetahs, tigers, panthers, leopards and cows and horses. Help the environment today not tomorrow. Even if you don't want to do it. Do it for the environment. Do it now. Don't waste it recycle it.

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Age 14-18 Category

1st Prize

Dudley Ellis

Why is the environment important to Barbados?

Too very often we look at the environment as something that provides aesthetic pleasure for both locals and tourists alike. However, have we ever consciously taken the time to contemplate what Barbados would be like without a healthy environment? A disease-ridden, desolate and underdeveloped rock is what one could hazard as the possibility. The benefits to be derived from the environment are too numerous for one to exhaust. Among this myriad of advantages, things such as economic sustainability, improved general health of the populace and social inclusiveness are of key note.

Many people fail to see the bridge between the environment and the economy. Barbados, a country whose main foreign exchange earner is the volatile industry of tourism, must have a healthy environment if it is to continue. Our beaches, reefs, cane fields and caves are just some of the magnets that attract thousands of people to our small country year after year. Agriculture, industrial processing and even where one may reside are all decided by the environment. Poor management through accelerated soil erosion, depletion of arable land, contamination of both air and water degrade the environment to levels that make it unsustainable. If we destroy the natural resource we have today then what are we leaving for our future?

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Dengue, tetanus, E. coli and pesticides in our water are some of the disastrous effects resultant from our neglect of the environment. Healthy surroundings not only reduce illness but allows for the cultivation of herbs and other plants that help to fight disease and promote life. Hotels who pump their waste into our sea, farmers who overuse fertilizers and pesticides and squatters who choose to live in areas where they can directly affect the water course are all writing a death sentence on our country. Even the cars on the road that billow black exhaust into our atmosphere create a plethora of respiratory problems that can affect Barbadians in the long run. Tell me, should a child develop asthma from smog inhalation that could have been avoided?

Since the environment impacts each of us, it is fair to say that all Barbadians are charged with the task of caring for it. Caring for the environment by planting trees, cleaning gullies and beaches as well as reducing pollution in its various forms nurtures a feeling of nationalism. When we as a country understand the true value of our surroundings then we can harness its maximum potential. This social inclusiveness has spillover effects such as improved waste management plans, reduced pollution and increased environmental longevity. Collectively, this augurs well for our development as a nation and a people.

Consequently, it is clear to see that the environment is of paramount concern for Barbados. Our economy, health and nationalism are all impacted upon by the state of our environment. The environment isn't just our present but it's our future as well. So I ask, "Barbados, tropical island paradise full of life and vigor or desolate, inhospitable death bed?" You decide.

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2nd Prize

Shan Bovell

“Why is the environment important to Barbados?”

In an underdeveloped country, don't drink the water; in a developed country, don't breathe the air (Changing Times Magazine). The environment is the most fundamental unit of life for Barbados. It's funny how the government only thinks about the environment when something drastic happens or when Mother Nature lays her hands on us. We have taken this key and unlocked a whole new world but haven't been showing it the gratitude it deserves. For too long we've been changing our environment to suit our needs or should we say “moving the earth to please” as the motto of C.O. Williams Construction Company says.

According to World Resources Institute in a case study entitled *Reefs at Risk in the Caribbean*, Laretta Burke and Jon Maidens and contributing authors: Mark Spalding, Philip Kramer, Edmund Green, Suzie Greenhalgh, Hillary Nobles, Johnathan Kool. The Reefs at Risk analysis suggests that all the reefs around Barbados are threatened by human activities. Barbados is densely populated and has experienced a rapid increase in coastal development and tourism, with a consequent degradation of the marine environment. The reefs not only provide a shelter to fish and sea creatures but it also plays a major role in tourism e.g. snorkelling and sea-bathing.

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Gullies in Barbados are home to wild vegetation and animals, which add a rich biodiversity to our lush habitat. The gully alone hits all aspects of life. It is home to many species of plants, a safe haven to the green monkey, the Aerial Trek's zip line and before you could have entered Harrison's Cave via a gully. Illegal dumping in gullies is not only appalling but hazardous, bringing diseases and polluting our water supply and our soil. Not only is it hazardous but it doesn't have a positive impact on Barbadians and visitors alike who see this disgusting mess.

If we protect our environment, we protect our tourism. Our government has been throwing away thousands of dollars instead of preserving our environment for future generations. Sun, sea and sand is not enough since other countries in the Caribbean offer these commodities. Dominica is called the Nature Island of the Caribbean as its environment remains unspoiled, something so rare that it draws tourists to the island. If we become versatile and use both coastal landforms and our land we can save our tourism industry. Activities such as the Island Safari tours which go more in to the island give tourists a different perspective and appreciation of the country.

We have modified our environment so radically that we must now modify ourselves to exist in this new environment (Norbert Wiener); technology alone can't save us we must save ourselves. On the West Coast of Barbados, I can see major damage going on and I cannot understand how we Barbadians can sit and watch foreign investors just rip apart our coastline. We can no longer see, smell or hear the beach since hotel after hotel has lined this coastline. I'm calling on

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each person living on these 166 square miles, to please stop destroying our environment or it will destroy us.

3rd Prize

Juwayriyah Nana

WHY IS THE ENVIRONMENT IMPORTANT TO BARBADOS?

“What about nature? It’s our planet’s womb.” Michael Jackson’s Earth Song perfectly echoes the essence of Mother Earth’s importance to the world. Nature is the world’s womb from which life evolves and from which mankind survives, then, does it not have a right upon us, the humans, who exploit it and leave a trail of destruction? This is the picture everywhere: burnt forests, eroding coastlines, increase in illegal dumping turning our surroundings into hazardous disasters waiting to happen. Barbados is not an exception and we need to identify the importance of the environment to us. For as Earl Nightingale said, “Our environment, the world in which we live and work, is a mirror of our attitudes and expectations.” So, if a negative attitude pervades our people, their thoughts will translate into negative effects for our surroundings.

Tourism is seen as a major industry for foreign revenue in Barbados. With clear, warm waters and white, sandy beaches, the landscape are the main tools used in attracting tourists. We cannot then afford to pollute our primary sources of attraction. As a result of the expensive prices found here and the economic recession, Barbados is now competing with other tourist destinations around the world to maintain its economy and its standard of living. At whose expense do

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we litter on our beaches, marking our sandy shores with waste? Certainly not the tourists! It is heartening to see beach clean-ups being organised around the island but would it not be better, if, we, as a nation, dispose our garbage in the various cans and recycling bins?

Barbados' coasts are bordered with coral reefs which are not only used as tourist attractions but also for fishing. Coral reefs are societies which act as barriers to waves whereby preventing land erosion. However, in recent years coral reefs are being destroyed either through pollution which smothers the coral or through damage by snorkelling or boats. Coral takes thousands of years to build and yet, here, we thoughtlessly destroy our natural protectors of our beaches against strong currents and storm surges. By destroying, we also lose the chance to attract marine biologists and to create a niche for the youth in exploring the flora and fauna of coral reefs. Like Michael Jackson sings, "we've turned kingdoms to dust." Do we want these underwater kingdoms to perish like those on land?

As we affect the environment, so too does the environment affect us. In third-world countries, the unsanitary conditions provoke the outbreak of diseases which plague the impoverished. We cannot afford to lose our human resource – our people to health problems associated with poor environmental conditions. Preserving our environment extends to ensuring the good health and strength of our people.

We need to realise the importance of the environment and acknowledge mankind's destructive force. We need to educate our people, show them ways to preserve our environment before time runs out. For "did you not stop to notice, the crying Earth, the weeping shores?" (Michael Jackson, Earth Song)

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HONOURABLE MENTION-Ages 14-18

Michaela Welch

Why is the Environment Important to Barbados?

Many of us go about our daily lives, having picnics under shady trees in parks, frolicking on white sandy beaches and experiencing the wonders of nature at the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary, but have we ever stopped and thought about nature? Have we ever really wondered why the environment is important to us here in Barbados? Honestly? We probably haven't. We take these things for granted, using them simply for our pleasure and not realizing the importance they have on us as a community. So let us take a minute to look and really see why the environment is important to Barbados.

First of all, it is important for our tourist industry. Tourism is our main form of revenue and those tourists come down from cold places such as The United Kingdom and Canada to enjoy our warm climate and our beaches. Without this environment, they would not want to come down to Barbados but go somewhere else, where these things are readily available. This means no foreign exchange and we lose out on a lot of money.

In addition to this, even though we are less than 5% forest, our environment provides homes for many plants and animals. For example, the Green Monkey, which can be found in places where there is still much vegetation, is important

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in vaccine production. Cell lines derived from their tissue are used to make vaccines for polio and smallpox. Another example is the bearded fig tree, which is an important part of our heritage because it is that from which we got our name. Other important plants include our ground provisions, which feed us, and cane which we use to make sugar and export, which brings in money for our country.

Most importantly, the environment is connected to everything we need as humans to survive. The sun provides light energy; trees provide oxygen for us to breathe in and absorb carbon dioxide which can be harmful if left to build up; our limestone works as a purifier giving us some of the cleanest drinking water in the world; food is planted in the soil to feed us; and the list goes on. All of our daily resources come from the environment itself.

Now that we know just how important our environment is, it is our job to improve and maintain it, not just for us but for future generations. We are responsible for it because it is our home and without it we would have no place to get clean air, good water and even food. Without taking care of our environment, we would have to suffer adverse effects including: population health issues, eroded soil, dirty water, etc. Reducing our negative impact gives us a healthier and better place to live because without our environment, we are nothing.

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Jade Forsberg

Why is The Environment Important to Barbados?

The wind shakes the gentle leaves of the crimson mahogany trees, their roots firmly planted deep in the rich soil. The wind tickles the beards of the fig trees and pushes the waves that gently sweep the wide shores of crinkling sand. It then skims across an ocean of the clearest turquoise. Beneath this the currents swim through underwater forests filled with the brightest hues of the most beautiful colours ever seen. Among these, schools of the most flamboyant and brilliant fish play hide and seek with thousands of corals. In this tranquil forest life is abundant and rich in colour. In this tranquil forest our lives are made possible. It was because of this forest that our island was able to form.

The wind calmly brushes through the cane fields, rustling their stalks. It weaves its way through flowers and sways with the palm trees. It crosses over the roads, gently picking up particles of dust and asphalt from construction, then sails over the fading turquoise ocean. The dust carried away now slowly sinks to the depth of a dying forest that was once full of life. Its endless hues are now bleached pale, almost as white as snow. The fish are scarce and they no longer play. Instead they hide from the fishermen's nooses, their cold wooden crates and their shadows patrolling the surface above. The waves now carve away at a receding shore and break strong-standing cliffs.

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To think that once what we now call our “beautiful” home was a paradise beyond our wildest imagination is almost impossible to grasp. To think that our lush cane fields, cleverly engineered roads and luxury hotels on the beach have destroyed something so much more stunning is madness. So we even care about our dying corals that built the earth on which we stand? Or about the magnificent mahogany trees that graced our island? Or the fig trees that gave our eastern island its name? Are we too blind to see how important our environment is? Our shores are disappearing, leaving the soil prone to the lashing of the waves and all our industries are at the mercy of erosion. Our environment is the most important thing we have, without it we wouldn’t exist. We need to take better care of it or we will lose everything that we hold dear to us. Action needs to start immediately unless we’d rather sink to the depths of the decaying beauty around us.

Jakita Connell

“The environment refers to the external surroundings including all of the biotic and abiotic factors that surround and affect the survival and development of an organism or population.”¹ It is therefore inevitable that the environment will assume some level of importance to all of the world’s nations. However, there are special reasons why it is of particular importance to every inch of our 166 square mile tropical paradise, Barbados. The environment sustains our life, livelihood and even national progress. Our limestone formation, sandy white

¹ Biology Online (www.biologyonline.com)

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beaches, slender coconut trees that sway in clean, fresh air are all elements of the environment.

The environment is responsible for our livelihood. Each year, approximately 500,000 tourists travel to this isle² for a once-in-a-lifetime time experience. Drawn by breathtaking beauty and unspoiled sophistication, these visitors represent our most dependable source of income and foreign exchange. The **Animal Flower Cave, Wild Life Reserve** and formerly the **Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary** catch the fancy of our visitors. Active underground waterfalls form the backdrop of sparkling stalactites and stalagmites to create a truly alluring setting in the exclusive **Harrison's Cave**.

Additionally, scenic flora and fauna feature our Beautiful Island Mass. Barbados' variant and brightly coloured tropical blooms continue to place us in the limelight annually at the **Chelsea Flower Show**. Our environment is such that the rare green monkey is at play in the numerous gullies on this island. Coral reefs thrive in our clear, warm waters and fringe the coasts. They provide a rich biodiversity, spectacular underwater experiences and minimize damage to our coasts by reducing wave action during hurricanes.

Further still, having joined the ranks of the world's "Developed" nations in 2010³ the environment assumed an even greater level of importance. This advancement was based upon the excellent quality of life Barbadians enjoy of which access to clean water, good sanitation and clean air form its totality. As a developed nation, it is imperative that the environment reflects this status and our relatively small land mass means that we are more environmentally

² Based on statistics gathered from the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (2006-2010)

³ United Nations Human Development Index Status & Nation News, 2010

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vulnerable. This, the effects of pollution and lack of environmental preservation will, in comparison to a large country, have a more adverse impact on us in a shorter time span.

The environment is important to Barbados as it is a source of life. Clear, pure water which is ready for consumption flows freely from our taps. This is as a result of our unique limestone formation which filters our water supply which is pumped from underground aquifers. Since we are blessed with a readily available supply of water, many Barbadians enjoy it with the erroneous belief that it is inexhaustible. Many are in fact oblivious to the actuality that Barbados is one of the world's water scarce nations.

The environment of Barbados is a unique and natural marvel. With such a heartfelt appreciation for its importance, it is without wonder that we so proudly declare that “...*these fields and hills beyond recall are now our very own.*”⁴

⁴ Extract from the Barbados National Anthem